

## ACROSS THE SANDS.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.



THE sky was gray and overcast, and the incoming tide beat against the bluffs complainingly, bringing with it the sorrowful echo of a wind far out on the ocean.

Maynard Reade stood on the beach, gazing seaward, with the rugged pile of cliffs at his left, and in front the wide sweep of waters.

He had no business to be there; he ought to have been more than a mile off, in the old gray barn that stood within hailing-distance of the old gray farm-house which he called home, as his father and grandfather had done before him. Another pair of hands was needed in the hay-packing, and Maynard had never been given to shirking his portion of any labor which had to be performed. Yet here he was, at four o'clock on this September afternoon, wasting his time in profitless wanderings; nor was it the first occasion, by many, on which, during the past weeks, he had been guilty of similar derelictions from duty.

His mother had begun to wonder what ailed the boy; he too had wondered when the fever first seized him, but he soon learned the nature of his malady, and did not attempt to hide the knowledge from himself. He was insanely in love—a natural enough consequence of being a young man of two-and-twenty with an athletic frame and an even more powerful imagination.

Pauline Dorimer had, three months before, dawned on Reade's horizon, and her first smile kindled the flame which burned so fiercely in his heart. Fate meant the pair to make acquaintance, and so it was brought about in orthodox romance fashion, by the young man's saving her from drowning when she had recklessly swum too far out into the surf.

He was thinking of that day, as he stretched himself on the sand and lay staring up at the sky. He went carefully over the incidents of the weeks which had succeeded the adventure, while the slow beat of the tide sounded an accompaniment to his reflections, and the face of the woman he worshiped floated before his eyes like a beatific vision.

In a way, Reade felt his love to be madness, though pride and ambition whispered that he had a future—could he not render it worthy of her acceptance? He meant to try; but he wanted the assurance that she would care, and as yet he had not dared to put his longing into speech.

He rose with a sigh, and decided to return home. He had hoped to meet Miss Dorimer; but it was growing so late, he felt certain that if she had been down on the beach she must have gone back to the village by another path. With a stick which he had cut as he crossed the alder thicket near his house, Maynard stood punching holes in the sand, and thinking vaguely of his plans for the future. He began tracing lines on the smooth hard surface, and presently noticed that he had accidentally made the outline of a great heart—nothing was wanting but the curves at the top. He drew these portions very carefully; the design was really capital, and, with a smile, half amused, half sad, he formed some letters in the centre.

As he stopped to regard his work, he heard the jingle of a horse's bells just beyond the corner of the bluff, then the sound of a shrill boyish voice uplifted in objurgation eloquently and indiscriminately distributed on the universe in general. Presently Reade caught sight of Farmer Gaines's old pony, wagon, and son Bobby. There was evidently something wrong, for the lad jumped down from his seat and surveyed the harness hopelessly while he held his restive beast by the bridle.

Maynard hurried forward to the lad's assistance, without pausing to efface his sketch.

"What's the matter, Bobby?" he called.

"The dod derved breechin's bruk itself somehow, and this little catamount won't stand still so I can tinker it," rejoined the boy, without taking the trouble to turn his head.

"All right, Bobby, you hold on there, and I'll

see what can be done," Maynard answered, good-naturedly. "Oh, we'll easily manage this if you've a piece of twine."

"It was a wonder there was anybody in reach, and it'll be jist my luck if I hain't a bit of string," grumbled Bobby, exhibiting a misanthropy worthy of a nineteenth-century poet. But his pocket yielded up the requisite article, and before long he was laughing at Maynard's jokes, though as soon as possible he stopped, and, by way of thanks for the aid he had received, observed despondently that he expected the "consarned thing would break again afore he got half-way home."

Just as Maynard started to help Bobby, a young lady had appeared on the sands, coming from the opposite direction. She was a tall slight girl, carrying her summer hat in one hand, and holding a great bunch of cat-tails in the other; a stylish creature in spite of her simple dress and rustic shoes, with a face which was fascinating rather than handsome—an odd contradictory face, which to any keen observer plainly revealed the salient good and evil points in her character.

She saw Reade disappear behind the bluffs, and, as she neared them, the light breeze blew toward her the voices of the two speakers, and she smiled at Bobby's misanthropic utterances. She reached the drawing and stood for a little, looking down at it. She smiled again, then frowned, then glanced toward young Reade and sighed.

At that instant, Maynard turned his head and saw her standing there. He hastily finished his task and walked toward the lady, remembering with a hot flush that he had forgotten to obliterate his foolish work and the tell-tale initials.

As he drew near, Miss Dorimer took one of her cat-tails and drew several heavy perpendicular and horizontal lines across the sketch.

"How do you do, Mr. Reade?" she said, as he reached her side. "I have just put a finishing-touch to your triumph of artistic skill. Hearts are like raspberry-tarts—the more crosses you put on them, the stronger they are."

"I made that by accident," Reade answered, as he set his foot on the drawing, while his face grew scarlet afresh and Miss Dorimer gave a wicked little laugh.

"Don't let Bobby Gaines drive off," she said; "he must carry my cat-tails home. They're a heavier load than the most-heavily-crossed heart could be."

"I'll give them to him," Reade replied, holding out his hand for the rushes.

"Bobby must take me also—I am too tired

to walk any further," she said, looking down at her heavy shoes, which were at least two sizes too large. "I soaked my boots hopelessly in the Grainger bog. Luckily, I came out near Mrs. Millicent's cottage, and the good soul kindly lent me these."

"I thought you meant to go beyond the bluffs," Reade observed; "I went down there, then came round here. I concluded you had not come, and now—"

He did not finish his sentence; but his voice expressed a keen disappointment, to which Miss Dorimer apparently gave no heed. As they reached the wagon, she said:

"Bobby, you want to drive me home, I know."

Bobby grinned, but immediately qualified that involuntary show of satisfaction by adding:

"Wal, I s'pose the old pony and trap'll stand it ef you can; an' I do know as you weigh much more'n a nextry bag of flour."

"You're a delightful boy, Bobby," she cried, laughing gayly. "I'm going to propose getting up a prize for you as the truth-teller of the neighborhood."

"I don't want none," Bobby averred. "Prizes allays mems Sabbath-school books, and what I want is the seekle to 'The Perary Pirate of the Dakots Divide'—it's called 'Golden-Tressed Theresy; or, The Queen of the Phantom Band.'"

"You shall have it, Bobby, before you are a week older," Miss Dorimer promised, as Reade helped her into the wagon.

"I must say good-bye; poor old Tony mustn't be asked to drag my avoidupois up the hill," the young man said, trying to laugh, though every feature in his handsome face showed the disappointment he felt.

Miss Dorimer echoed his farewell, and Bobby started the pony; then she glanced back at Reade, standing, the picture of misery, in the middle of the road, and laid her hand on the reins.

"Bobby," she said, "you must let the pony walk all the way, else I shall get out; I can't have some disciple of the immortal Bergh arresting me for cruelty. Mr. Reade, are you waiting to give us a quarter of a mile in advance, in order to have the pleasure of passing our caravan? It would be kinder to walk by the wagon, and give a push now and then to encourage the pony."

Bobby giggled, and Reade hurried forward with a suddenly-illuminated countenance. Miss Dorimer addressed most of her conversation to her small charioteer; but she looked and smiled at Reade till the foolish young fellow was filled with such ecstasy that he seemed, to himself,

walking along a glorified way which could lead to no less commonplace bourne than elf-land or Paradise.

Pauline Dorimer was three years Reade's junior, to count by time, but double that in experience, and, though she looked like a poetess and could dream like one on occasion, prided herself on being as practical and hard-headed a young woman as could be found within the range of New York society.

Her mother suffered from some internal malady, and had been ordered a season of perfect quiet. Pauline needed the repose also, and the same was true of the family exchequer; for she and her parent habitually lived beyond their means.

Miss Dorimer was tired, disappointed, and dissatisfied, and not disposed to grumble at the banishment to that dull New England coast village. She could appreciate nature, and had yearnings for a higher, wider life. She was never more dangerous than when this mood took possession of her, and it held full sway when she arrived at Nescott.

Not long after her arrival, she had written to a friend who asked how she managed to support life in that desert:

"I assure you that vegetating is a very agreeable process. I know just how the asparagus feels while it is growing—I like asparagus. I have developed a taste for walking; I swim; I read—fancy finding all Balzac and De Musset in the garret, left by some stranger who good-naturedly died in the hotel! I sleep enormously; I eat ditto. I listen to mamma's complaints till I'm tired, then I scold her. I sleep again; then I eat; then I walk, or drive a diabolical little donkey, with mamma in the cart beside me, prophesying our speedy death till I wish it would happen.

"The next day, I carry out the same programme, and the next and the next—there is never any change.

"Oh, betweenwhiles, I attend to the education of a youth of the neighborhood. It is true that he finished his college course only a few months ago, and graduated with high honors; but he has still a great deal to learn. He is a remarkable youth, both in mind and appearance, with eyes like a Newfoundland dog's and a gift for composing exceedingly musical verses in my honor. He thinks me a goddess risen from the sea. I am educating him rapidly. Will it make him happier? Will he be grateful?

"I fear not—humanity never is. I expect, later, he will curse the hour when he met a goddess; but, doubtless, the discipline will do

him good. Besides, it is only my vanity that makes me suppose him to be deeply impressed—he never has confessed it."

The recollection of that letter flashed into her mind, as the pony jogged slowly on, and she talked to Bobby and gave Maynard Rende smiles and glances which went to the very core of his heart, while his earnest soul looked at her from those truthful brown eyes. The words she had written caused Miss Dorimer a guilty sensation. She had known when she wrote them that they were not true; but she had never felt the extent of their falsity as now. The man loved her—he was a man, not the boy she had styled him; and she admitted, too, that his love would be worth the possession of a far worthier nature than her own. Unfortunately, this remorseful softened mood only rendered her more bewitching, and fettered closer the chain which bound poor Reade.

When Miss Dorimer reached the hotel and went upstairs to see her mother, she found that lady in a state of pleasurable excitement over a letter she had just received.

"How lucky it is that I have got so well and strong!" she cried. "Here is a pressing invitation for us to visit the Hunters at their country-place. They want us by the thirtieth."

"That will leave us just eight days here," was her daughter's only reply to the announcement.

"What an odd girl you are!" Mrs. Dorimer exclaimed. "I thought you would be crazy to get away; even I begin to feel the dullness, now I am so much better."

"Naturally! Then the Hunters always make one's stay with them very enjoyable," Pauline answered, as she moved about looking for a suitable place to bestow her rushes.

Mrs. Dorimer watched her in silence for a moment or two, then she said in a quiet voice, oddly at variance with the eagerness in her eyes:

"Colonel Haversham will be there."

"And a large party besides, no doubt," rejoined Pauline.

"Last year, he was greatly taken with you," Mrs. Dorimer went on, in a somewhat injured fretful tone. "If he hadn't been so suddenly called back to Montana, I'm sure he would—would have made you an offer. His mine has proved a wonderful success: he's a millionaire already. I—I'm sure he was dreadfully in earnest. You—"

She stopped abruptly as Pauline looked at her, though the girl's face exhibited neither interest nor impatience.

"Very likely," she said. "I know what you

want to say, mother; but we needn't go over the matter—I understand perfectly my duty as a woman of the nineteenth century. Relations, governesses, novels—they all teach it. Money! position! a rich husband!"

She began quietly; but, before she ended, her low voice had grown fairly violent in its passion.

"Well," rejoined Mrs. Dorimer, after another brief silence, "they are all very good things, certainly."

Pauline began to laugh, and turned to leave the room.

"Bravo, little mother—so they are!" was her answer. "Now, I must brush my hair, and we'll have tea."

While she was gone, Mrs. Dorimer sat indulging in agreeable visions of the future, in which Colonel Haversham played the part of an admiring husband, with a warm regard for his mother-in-law.

Whatever her daughter's meditations might have been, they had left no trace on her features when she appeared again. The two talked pleasantly on various subjects—discussed the proposed visit; but, though Haversham's name was several times mentioned, no further reference was made to his fortune or his possible intentions.

Mrs. Dorimer habitually went to bed early; it was part of the régime she had been following; and, as usual, Pauline read her to sleep, never leaving this task to the faithful maid, as so many young women would have done, while pluming themselves on being dutiful and self-sacrificing to a degree which Pauline would have declared that she was far too selfish even to wish to attain.

It was barely half-past nine when Miss Dorimer went downstairs. She glanced into the parlors, where the score of guests still left were trying to find amusement in music, cards, scandal, or flirtation, according to their tastes; but the scene was not sufficiently alluring to induce her to enter. She passed on through the hall and out into the piazza, below which a lawn dotted over with clumps of hardy evergreens sloped down to the beach. The full moon hung over the waters, fringed by a few white clouds that intensified its golden light. The sky was a great turquoise dome, the sands a sweep of molten silver, and through the distance came the sound of a clear tenor voice, so sweet that its lack of cultivation did not jar on the ear.

"I am going in," Miss Dorimer said, after listening for a few instants. She spoke aloud, as if replying to a person who had just uttered some remonstrance. "I am going in."

She stood still awhile longer, gazing out over the waters, then descended the steps and slowly crossed the lawn. As she neared the shore, she saw the singer coming round a curve just above the hotel grounds. Almost at the same instant he caught sight of her, standing quite near—looking, he thought, like some beautiful spirit in the moonlight.

"You are a very ill-conducted young man," she called. "All sober-minded people in these parts are getting ready for bed, instead of playing troubadours on the sands."

"And what about yourself?" Reade asked, regarding her with happy eyes.

"I am here on an errand of duty," she replied. "I heard you from the piazza, and came to warn you that it was high time for you to be at home. Didn't you tell me you had to get to work at some unearthly hour?"

"Ah, but you see old Jake Evans broke the hay-press this afternoon; so to-morrow must be a holiday."

"Reckless troubadour! You appear to exult instead of properly regretting the loss of time and money."

"I know I ought to regret both," he replied, laughing; "but, as you often say, there are so many things one ought to be sorry for that one can't care about."

"Don't ascribe such sentiments to me," rejoined Miss Dorimer, austere. "I doubt if I ever made the remark—anyway, I never mean what I say; and, besides, it was intended to show you how dreadfully such theories sound."

"Somehow, I felt sure I should see you again this evening," cried Reade, after he had duly laughed at her nonsense, which seemed to him so witty. He drew an envelope from his pocket, adding: "I meant to leave this for you at the hotel—there's just a line to say that I should be free to-morrow. You have so often wanted to walk over to Charton Hill—"

"And is that all you had for me?" she interrupted. "Didn't you confess to-day—it was hard work to make you—that you had written some new verses which I was to read?"

"I—I did put them in the envelope," he said, shyly.

"Then I forgive you; and, as mamma has agreed to drive out to-morrow with old Mrs. Tracy, we will have our walk. And, since poetry is always prettier repeated in the moonlight than read in sober black-and-white, I want to hear yours now."

Reade began his lines in a somewhat faltering

voice, which gained clearness and force as he went on. He had a natural gift for declamation, and recited the poem well. Although in her own praise, Miss Dorimer's critical faculty was too strongly developed for her to have enjoyed the stanzas, had they been weak and trashy; but they were both musical and full of pretty fancies, with here and there a metaphor which gave evidence of real imagination.

Up and down, in the moonlight, they walked for a full hour. There was nobody to spy on her movements or even suggest any impropriety—not that Miss Dorimer would have cared much for the opinion of the little colony still lingering in the hotel. She made Reade talk, as she had the power to do—of books, of his hopes, his dreams—and she enjoyed the hour as thoroughly as did the enraptured young man.

After she reached her own room, Miss Dorimer recollected that she had not told Reade they were so soon to go away. She would speak of it during the next day's ramble.

"He will miss me at first," she thought, as she sat brushing out her hair. "Heigho—I verily believe I shall miss him!" She leaned her head on her hand and gazed absently into the mirror, while the events of the pretty idyl they had lived during the past weeks floated before her vision as palpably as if photographed on the glass. She rose abruptly, muttering: "Upon my word, Pauline Dorimer, I believe your brain is softening; luckily, you are going away. The boy will soon forget—if he does really care. As for you—well, you are to fulfill your destiny; and, if Colonel Haversham condescends to ask you to marry him, you are to accept the blessing thankfully. Yes—I will tell Maynard, to-morrow, that I am going."

The next day came and passed, and the two made their excursion; but Miss Dorimer did not inform Reade that the date of her departure had been set. She told herself afterward that she had scarcely remembered it; when she had, he was talking on some subject which interested her, and she would not interrupt him. Then the walk was so nearly at an end, it seemed a pity to cloud its close by an abrupt announcement of the disagreeable fact.

Several days elapsed, and still she had not broached the subject. Then Mrs. Dorimer received a letter from a friend, asking them to make her a short visit on their way to the Hunters' country-seat. This change of plan would necessitate an immediate departure; but, without waiting to consult her daughter, the invalid sent a telegram accepting the invitation.

A couple of hours after Pauline heard this decision, Maynard Reade called at the hotel to leave some books which had been lent him by Miss Dorimer. The young lady was out, but her mother was seated in the piazza, and she welcomed the visitor with the friendliness she always showed him, having no idea that he could be presumptuous enough to lift his eyes to her daughter.

"I am so glad to have an opportunity to bid you good-bye," she said, after the interchange of a few courteous speeches. "We are off even sooner than we expected. You know we meant to stay several days yet, but we start to-morrow."

"To-morrow?" he echoed, stupidly.

"Oh, yes; I had a letter this morning. So glad to have seen you! I dare say you will find Miss Dorimer somewhere on the sands. Good-bye, Mr. Reade—good-bye."

He crossed the lawn and passed along the beach through the red glare of the gathering sunset. She was going away—there was room for no other thought in his mind—going away. Of course, he had known that she could not tarry much longer; but to have the certainty that the separation was at hand flung at him with such abruptness roused a mental tempest in his impulsive nature of which a sober-minded practical person could hardly have conceived the possibility.

He could not find her on the shore near the hotel; he crossed the little creek and hastened toward the bluffs below the village. He saw her seated on a ledge of rock close to the water, watching the sunset with the wistful dreamy look in her face which he knew so well.

"Pauline!" he cried. "Pauline!"

It was the first time he had ever called her by her name. She turned and saw him standing there with his white face and blazing eyes. The very tone of his voice had told her that he knew the truth.

"I was wondering if I should miss you," she said.

"You are going away, to-morrow, to-morrow!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, yes! You have seen mamma? It is rather sudden—but, of course, it had to come."

"What am I to do—how am I to live?" he cried.

"Of course, you won't remain here much longer," she rejoined. "You don't want to be a farmer on a small scale! You have a fine career before you, if you make use of your talent and education as I know you will."

"I can, if—if—"

"We have talked of it all so often," she con-

tinued, apparently not noticing his half-completed sentence; "I can't give you any more wise advice! Oh, I shall look for great things from you—mind, I shan't be content with your making any ordinary reputation or success!"

"And you care—you do care!" he exclaimed.

"Why, are you not one of my best friends? I feel as if we had always known each other! Who could care more than I?" she answered, speaking so quickly that he could not interrupt. She knew what a vow trembled on his lips—she wanted to keep him from making it—she must at least spare his pride that humiliation. How handsome he looked—how full of strength, mental and physical! Oh, he was a man of whose love any true woman might be proud—he glad to wait for while he sought fame and fortune: but she could not; she was too petty—too worldly—too utterly of the earth, earthy!

All she could do was to spare his pride a little; so much generosity she might show—she who, to gratify her vanity, amuse her solitary hours, had led him on deeper and deeper into the mazes of his fool's paradise, which was to end so suddenly in a desert more barren than the sea-sands at their feet. But no; she had not been wholly influenced by vanity and selfishness! The idyl of the past months had done more than exercise a strange fascination over her—it had rooted itself into her inmost heart! She had tried to laugh at the idea, but it was true: she knew it now—knew that she loved him, and, besides remorse, must bear her part of the suffering.

"You care—you care!" he repeated, but she went resolutely on without heeding his passionate utterance:

"When you have published your book and are famous—your very first one is to make you so—remember, I prophesy it—"

"If you say so, it will!" he cried, holding out both hands, while the glory in his eyes seemed to scorch her very soul like fire. "And then I may come to you—then I may say—"

"You will fairly look down on me and my silly narrow life!" she broke in. "I shall have married my rich admirer—be steeped to the throat in worldliness! Oh, I hate myself for worshipping wealth and luxury, but I could not live without them! So my destiny is settled—a miserable mean one—but I am worthy of no other!"

"Married?" she heard him mutter.

"Oh, you must give me a little pity in the midst of your scorn," she hurried on. "You see, money is god nowadays—it is only geniuses like you who can afford to hold it in contempt!

It is necessary to my existence; I'm a terribly hard commonplace creature at bottom! I've not been my real self during these weeks—the sea-air has made me a dreamer! I must wake up now; I am going back to actual life—to the real world—to my petty ambitions—to—to a rich husband!"

She broke off with a bitter laugh which cut her heart as cruelly as it did his. The misery in Reade's eyes filled her with horrible pain and remorse. She longed to fling her arms about his neck—to cry out that she loved him—to bid him leap with her into the sea—at least they might die together, since she was not courageous enough to live with and for him.

"I wonder if I am crazy?" he gasped. "It isn't possible that it is you who are speaking, or that you are in earnest!"

"It is my real self—you see what a contemptible self, too!" she replied. "And I am in earnest! Oh, look! There come some of those tiresome people from the hotel—we shall have to go back with them."

"I can't!" he groaned. "Oh, don't leave me like this."

"Mamma will need me," she urged.

"But this evening—there is so much I want to tell you."

She lifted her hand; she was determined that afterward he should be able to remember he had not actually put his heart into words—it would be a little consolation.

"I must go," she said, "and this must be the real good-bye! Of course, we shall see you before we leave—but I can't stop any longer now! Oh, don't be angry with me—you never would believe what a miserable delusion I am—I warned you!"

"I have not made any complaint," he answered, hoarsely. "You mean what you said about—the money—the rich husband?"

"I do mean it," she cried. "I am fit for nothing else—so greedy for wealth that I must have it, if I had to sell my soul for its possession. Oh, those dreadful people, here they come!"

Without a word of farewell, Maynard strode round the corner of the bluff and disappeared, leaving Pauline Dorimer overwhelmed by a sensation as if some supernatural being had just looked her soul through and through with pitiless eyes, whose scorn and condemnation must cast a blight over every pleasure, every success, during all the years to come.

In the night, Mrs. Dorimer was seized with an attack of spasms, and, during the next day, remained alarmingly ill. Fortunately, she had

the care of an excellent physician, who was enjoying a short season of rest at Nescott. He had known her for years, and, being well acquainted with the nature and progress of the malady from which she suffered, was able at length to subdue the violent paroxysms.

Pauline did not leave her mother until nearly two days had elapsed, and then, assured by the doctor that it would only require an interval of rest to restore the invalid to her ordinary health, she consented to go to bed.

The next morning found Mrs. Dorimer so much better, that the mercenary lady was already inclined to rebel because the physician would not allow her to rise and threatened to keep her still a prisoner for an indefinite length of time.

In the afternoon, Pauline went out for a walk, taking the road which led toward the hills. She reached a point from whence she could see Reade's house, nestled among the old apple-trees. She had turned her back on the shore, because the mere sight of the glistening waters recalled that parting with Maynard and the bitter pain and remorse which had kept their hold even in the midst of her watch beside her mother's sick-bed.

Reade had not even sent a message—a word of inquiry or sympathy. How utterly he must despise her! And how thoroughly she deserved his scorn!

That long vigil had proved a terrible ordeal to Pauline Dorimer. Constantly occupied as she had been with material cares for the sufferer, she had ample space for thought—or, rather, thought forced itself on her, in spite of her efforts to concentrate her mind on the actual duties of the moment. Maynard Reade's reproachful eyes haunted her every instant, and the recollection of her unworthy conduct grew always more unendurable. But one thing was certain: suffer as he might, his pain could not be greater than her own, and it could not last so long. He would learn to regard her memory with indifference, and this dream of his youth, when some chance might recall it, would only cause him a half-cynical, half-amused wonder that he could ever have believed himself really in love with a creature so vapid and worthless.

She was about to retrace her steps, when she heard her name called; and out from a neighboring field Bobby Gaines emerged, breathless with haste.

"Oh, Miss Pauline," he cried, "be you bound for the Readeses? I'm goin' to the store for something they wanted. I told Mrs. Reade I knowed you'd have been over to ask

about Maynard, only your mar was took so bad—"

"What is the matter with Maynard?" Pauline interrupted, sick and faint with a sudden fear.

"Land's sake! hain't ye heard?" demand'd Bobby. "Why, it's a miracle he wasn't killed. His shoulder was broke, and he struck his head against the rock—"

"Stop! tell it so I can understand!" she cried, clutching the lad's arm and shaking him back and forth in her excitement.

When the story was made clear, she knew that Reade had met with his accident that evening, as he rushed away from her, maddened by the conviction of her unworthiness, eager only to escape from the false idol he had so blindly worshipped; if he died, she should be his murderess.

Half an hour later, she was seated by Mrs. Reade in the old farmhouse, and had heard a detailed account of her trouble from the sad-eyed little mother.

In falling, Maynard had struck his head so heavily against a point of rock as to cause concussion of the brain, and had lain insensible for many hours. He had recovered from that comatose state, and, though his fever raged so high that he was partially delirious, the doctors held out good hope that the most serious danger was past. But there was a strange restlessness about him for which they could not account; he seemed to have some heavy weight on his mind, and he must be relieved of this before the peril could be considered really over.

Then the poor mother wrung her hands, crying that she was helpless; she could give the doctors no clue; she only knew that for weeks her boy had not been like himself; but he had offered her no confidence, though always the best son ever woman had—the very best.

He was asleep at present; if Miss Dorimer liked, she could go in and look at him. It was very kind of her to come—Maynard would be pleased when he heard of her visit.

Pauline softly entered the room where the sick man lay. As she approached the bed, he opened his eyes and looked vaguely about. His glance fell on her; he stretched out one hand with a smile, calling faintly:

"You do care! you do care!"

She sank on her knees by the bed and pressed her cheek against his pillow.

"I love you!" she said, in a low clear voice. "My love is not worth having; but, since you want it, it is yours."

"Oh, I can get well now," he answered, and fell asleep, with her hand held fast in his

The doctor would not hear of Mrs. Dorimer's making a journey till a fortnight had elapsed, and, as she could not leave in season to pay her promised visits, she was content to remain in their quiet retreat and enjoy the beauty of the bright autumn days.

Maynard Reade was able to leave his bed and take short walks and drives. Pauline had not wavered from her resolution or regretted it, though she marveled what the future would bring, and wondered how she was ever to make to her mother a confession which would strike that lady as little short of insanity.

One afternoon, there came another letter from Mrs. Hunter, imparting news which filled the invalid with hot indignation. She had just finished reading the epistle, when her daughter entered; and she cried in a horrified voice:

"Only fancy! Annie writes it is proved that Colonel Haversham has a Mexican wife down in Montana! Did one ever hear of such wickedness? Passing himself off for a single man!"

"No, he only did not mention the fact of his being married," rejoined Pauline, laughing. "Well, his Mexican charmer is welcome to him, mamma."

"Yes; for Mrs. Hunter says he is not nearly so rich as people thought," Mrs. Dorimer answered, in a tone which showed that the fact was a great consolation.

Pauline wondered anew how she was to tell her mother that she had promised to wait for a penniless man till he should be able to support her. She had three minds to do it then, and have the shock over; but it required even more courage than she possessed.

Presently she went down to the beach. As she sat there, she was thinking of her pledge, her future, and exulting at her own content and happiness. Life looked so much higher and broader; she was so ashamed of the old existence, the old self! She was glad that sacrifice would be necessary; proud that she found herself capable of regarding it without fear.

She looked up, and saw Maynard Reade coming across the sands from the direction of the hotel. She walked quickly forward to meet him, crying:

"Oh, how imprudent! How could you come?"

"Very easily," he answered, with a little laugh. "I drove over—Bobby Gaines brought me in the penny-wagon."

"But why didn't you send him to find me, instead of walking here?" she asked, as she made him seat himself on a great beam which lay conveniently near. "You saw mamma—she told you where I was?"

"Yes, indeed, I saw her," he replied, with another little laugh of sheer happiness.

"What has happened, to put you in such high spirits?" she asked. "One would really think some wonderful good luck had just befallen you!"

"The greatest that can ever come, you brought, the first day you paid me a visit," he replied.

"Oh, if I could only believe that!" she sighed. "I know it was so in my case—but for you—if I have done you a wrong—"

"In giving me happiness?" he interrupted. "Oh, your mother congratulated me heartily, and she told me something else—that she would give me a warm welcome as her son."

"Maynard!"

"Yes, indeed—just that, though you do survey me with such incredulous eyes," he answered. "Can you think—can you guess what has happened?"

"No, no! But since it makes you glad—"

"It was the only blessing I lacked," he said, "and even that has been granted—just to offer you! Do you remember my telling you of an uncle who went to California before I was born, and had never since been heard of?"

"Yes—well?"

"He is dead, Pauline, and—his fortune comes to me."

## "THOUGH IT TARRY."

BY EMMA S. THOMAS.

"Though it tarry, wait for it,"  
It will surely come;  
Like the carrier-pigeon,  
Hasting to its home.

Though the sunshine tarry,  
And the night is long,

Someday brings the sunshine;  
Someday rights the wrong.

Waiting, then, for someday,  
Even dark days go;  
And some bright day shall find us  
Sooner than we know.



## IN THE MONTH OF JUNE.

BY MISS LEE M'CRAN.



ALL you turn your eyes toward Kansas, and fix them on the fertile valley of the Chikaskia, while I tell you a story as old as love is?

It was a pretty site for a house, with that long sweep of prairie-land before it, which gradually sank into a channel for the lazily-flowing river. There were cornfields and wheatfields of seemingly limitless extent to the sides and rear of the house, which, in comparison to its extensive surroundings, appeared to be smaller than it really was. It was new and neat—just such a house as a good carpenter will build you, if you give him carte-blanche and five hundred dollars to do it with.

There were no fancy curtains at the windows, no vines at the doorway or flowers in the yard, no tin cup tied to the pump, or any of the small comforts around which betray a woman's touch, so that a Westerner with practiced eye would soon declare it a "bachelor's ranch."

As if to verify this statement, the door opened and the bachelor himself appeared. He stood on the threshold a moment, nervously brushing and rebrushing his hat, while his brand-new boots and "best clothes" gave a rather uncomfortable expression to his face and a restrained motion to all his movements.

But, if purity of thought, honesty of purpose, and an unruffled temperament make—or the lack of these things mar—a beautiful face, then we may call the young man fairly handsome, notwithstanding his pale eyes, his tawny mustache, and the fact that his hair was retreating distressingly fast from his forehead.

Closing and locking the door, he started down the road, walking at first with a swinging gait, which gradually increased to the quick energetic tread of a man bent on one purpose, engrossed in one thought—his destination.

The road was typically Kansan—wide and level, with only two deep furrows which wheels had worn in muddy weather to break its monotony; but there were plenty of tangled weeds along its sides—such weeds as nature loves to make, seemingly, to atone for their uselessness

VOL. XCV.—31.

and to entrap the attention of passers-by—weeds which certainly must amuse her inventive genius. But he did not bestow a glance upon anything; perhaps it was because he had been over the road rather often. At the end of his mile's journey was Jeanie McDowell: and who, knowing Jeanie, would wonder at his heedlessness of aught else?

While still quite a distance down the road, the setting sun showed him a group of three figures before a comfortable-looking farmhouse.

He peered eagerly at them for a moment, then smiled contentedly and hastened onward.

The three persons—two girls and one young man—were engaged in a game of croquet; not very intently, however—for the taller of the girls carelessly threw her mallet on the ground and exclaimed:

"There is Mr. McMurray coming! Jeanie, let's sit down and rest," as she dropped into a chair. Then she added questioningly: "I thought he didn't come here since—any more."

Jeanie's face saddened—for her friend would have said "since Carrie died"—and she replied quietly:

"Mr. McMurray is not like other folks, you know, Netta, and perhaps he finds consolation in coming."

"Or sees some resemblance to Carrie in you," Netta went on, heartlessly.

And her escort chimed in: "Perhaps he thinks 'one of the name as good as the same.'"

Jeanie made no answer except to say, as if to herself:

"I wish he would not come."

"Oh, don't you worry—I'll entertain him! I just love to hear his Scotch brogue and trap him into mistakes! Why, the other evening—" And Netta chattered on until he was within hearing-distance, while her fiancé looked at her as admiringly as if her smallness of soul were a thing to be proud of.

"Gude-evenin'! gude-evenin'!" the cordial voice called before its owner was fairly within the gate; and soon he was among them, shaking hands all around and accepting a mallet and an invitation from Netta to be her partner in the next game. It was enough of itself to make one conclude that life must be worth living, just to see the gladness which shone in his eyes as he looked at Jeanie.

But was she not well worth looking at, with her dark eyes and her brown hair, in which the sun was twisting threads of gold?

The sunlight was all gone, but a round-faced moon was smiling down on the busy players, when a horseman came up the road. Mr. McMurray was bending low over his balls; but he could not but observe how happy Jeanie's voice sounded as she said:

"Good-evening, Mr. Windom! You are just in time for our next train."

After greetings were interchanged and they gathered at the stake, there came an awkward pause—for there were four balls and five players!

Mr. McMurray grasped his mallet tight, glanced at Jeanie's confused face, and then handed it to the newcomer, saying hurriedly:

"You take my place: I want to see Mr. McDowell."

So he spent the hours—nine, ten, half-past ten—sitting by the door, talking about crops, listening to the clicking of the mallets, and wondering if she wouldn't come soon.

As if to condole with him, Jeanie's big dog came and sat close beside him, rubbed its head against his arm, and finally lay down at his feet.

The shortest bliss is worth the longest, weariest waiting, he thought—and, at last, she came in alone.

"Oh, I beg your pardon; I thought you had gone home," she said, as she seated herself on the doorstep. In reality, she had forgotten all about him.

Then they talked of croquet in general, their game in particular, speculated as to when Netta and Mr. Rolph would be married, and so on, until he said:

"You have heard of the picnic, next week? Will you go with me, that day?"

Jeanie gave a little start, and then said quietly:

"If you wish it—yes."

And, over and over, the words, simple and childlike, came back to him as he retraced the homeward road.

He walked slowly now, as if he had no destination at all, and said aloud: "I wish a good many things. Will it always be 'yes,' Jeanie?"

She leaned on her windowsill and thought within herself: "I wish he had not asked me. I don't want him as a lover. He was nice when Carrie was here, and treated me like a little sister. They weren't engaged, I know—don't believe either cared for the other; but— Oh, well—he has been such a good friend, I must treat him well. I wish Willard had asked me

first. It will teach him a good lesson. But I shall be good to Mr. McMurray as can be—dear old Jim!"

The picnic-day came, and with it, as early as permissible, Mr. McMurray.

Surely, Jeanie had never looked so pretty before, he thought; and he knew she had never treated him so kindly.

Instead of deserting him on the grounds, as she had sometimes done—though he always managed to find an excuse for such ill-treatment—she hovered near, like a guardian angel, protecting him from Netta's merciless fun-making and the ill-concealed laughter of her satellites.

It was a perfect day, a jolly crowd of young people, and, altogether, a model picnic, in Mr. McMurray's estimation. But, in the afternoon, the fun began to wane; even the winning sides lost interest, and threw down their racquets and mallets to lounge in the shade, agreeing with one accord that it was the very hottest day of the season.

So they talked and laughed, told anecdotes and jokes on one another, and did not notice the oppressive stillness of the woods, the silence in the insect-world around, or the seething clouds on the northern horizon.

Jeanie was standing under an old tree, reciting a parody to the intense amusement of the group before her, when suddenly a dreadful sound fell upon their ears. As if petrified, they gazed upward to the angry cloud above, and then to the bending, swaying trees around, realizing at last that this was no ordinary rainstorm, but a hurricane, that had come to their picnic.

"Jeanie!" shouted Mr. McMurray. And he sprang forward, as if to catch the great tree that broke above her head. He hurled her from the dangerous spot, but could not save himself.

Carefully, tenderly, yet with all haste, the young men cut away the boughs and lifted out his unconscious form, while Jeanie stood by, heedless of the pouring rain or the entreaties of her companions to seek shelter with them in a cabin near-by.

"For me! for me!" she repeated, half audibly and with more agony than had come to her in all her past compressed into those moments.

But he was not dead; and, as soon as the storm swept past, they bore him to his father's house, making a very sorrowful procession for a returning picnic-party.

One morning, many days afterward, Jeanie sat by his bedside, swaying a fan to and fro and entertaining him with bits of neighborhood-

gossip, making him forget for awhile his pain and the awful fact that his left arm had been taken away by the surgeon's knife. Every day she had come, bringing sunshine and health to the heroic sufferer; but never had she seemed so tender or happy as to-day. He looked at her as he had looked at her often before, and said earnestly:

"Are you very glad I am getting well, Jeanie?"

"How can you ask such a question?" she exclaimed. "If you had died, I should have felt all my life as if I had murdered you."

"Is that all?"

"All?" repeated Jeanie, confusedly. "No. You—I'm glad for you; and then—I'm glad—for I want—you at my—our—house on the nineteenth. Willard and I are to be married then, and of course my big brother must be present and be my—"

A spasm of pain came over his face, and she bent over him anxiously.

"It is too mu—tight, that bandage!" he groaned.

She loosened the band, bathed his feverish head, and bent over him with a loving smile, as she said good-bye and whispered:

"I'll tell you all about it when you are strong enough to hear it."

He waited till the last footfall had died away, and then buried his face in the pillow.

It was the eighteenth of June, the day before Jeanie McDowell's wedding, that she stood in her father's door and watched the sun sinking out of sight.

"A cloudless sunset means a clear to-morrow," she murmured. "A blessing on the bride on whom the sun shines." And away she went to arrange the ribbons on a dainty white dress.

Mr. McMurray stood in the doorway of his own home and looked at the same setting sun. It was his first visit since the memorable day

of the picnic, and it was to be his last; for he was going to start that night for "auld Scotland"—back to the hills and heather of his native soil.

He had said to his brother: "Since I have been ill, I long for the old home, Geordie; I'm tired of Kansas. I want you to take my farm and work it as if it were your own, sending me whatever rent you feel like. All I ask is that you take care of the trees and do not sell my black ponies."

He had finished packing up the few cherished articles he wished to take as reminders of his Western home, and now stood in the door, looking sometimes within the house and then without, as if to take the picture too across the sea.

He looked over his cornfields, and remembered that another hand would gather the fruit of his toil.

He saw the machinery in the field where he had left it so joyfully to attend the picnic; he heard the ponies crunching their corn in the stable near-by, and he knew he would never feed them again.

A piteous whine drew his attention; and, limping toward him from the hedge, came Jeanie's dog, and crouched at his feet with a wail.

He stooped to pat the dog's head, and was horrified to see the blood dripping from a painful and fatal wound in his shoulder.

"Oh, Bruno! poor Bruno! this is a hard world, isn't it? You will die, Bruno: I had better kill you. Would to God I could kill myself!"

After a long silence, full of bitter thoughts and moans more sad than any sobs, he entered the house and returned with a small revolver.

He caressed the shaggy head once more with his one bruised hand, placed the muzzle near its heart, and fired, then turned and disappeared in the darkening night.

## THOSE CREOLE EYES.

BY LILLA PRICE.

A PAIR of eyes like wells of light,  
So darkly soft, and softly bright;  
With richest bronze their tinting vies,  
A golden glint within them lies—  
Those lovely Creole eyes.

They brighten when the heart is glad,  
And droop in sorrow when 'tis sad;  
In mirth their laughing twinkle shows,  
And through their tender softness flows—  
Los ojos Criollos.

They flash in scorn—a scathing beam—  
And in their mocking splendor gleam,  
While dauntless courage in them lies,  
And foe and fate alike defies—  
Those sparkling Creole eyes.

Their limpid depths are crystal clear,  
And truth and purity shine here;  
But rarest beauty they disclose  
When in their depths a love-light glows—  
Los ojos Criollos.